WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A method of obtaining a map in a computer graphics program comprising:

5   receiving a request for a map picture;

obtaining a map file;

determining, from the map file, a location of vector based map data, wherein the vector based map data defines one or more map objects of the map picture; and

obtaining the vector based map data from the location, wherein the obtained

10   vector based map data satisfies the request for the map picture.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein only the vector based map data required to satisfy the request is obtained.

15   3.   The method of claim 1, further comprising displaying the map picture.

4.   The method of claim 1, wherein the vector based map data is obtained from a map server across a network connection.

20   5.   The method of claim 1, further comprising creating the map file.

6.   The method of claim 1, further comprising setting map display properties and a level of interaction.

25   7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the claim steps are performed by a browser plug-in.

8.   An apparatus for obtaining a map computer-implemented graphics system comprising:

30   (a)   a computer;

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(b) an application executing on the computer, wherein the application is configured to:

(i) receive a request for a map picture;

(ii) obtain a map file;

5 (iii) determine, from the map file, a location of vector based map data, wherein the vector based map data defines one or more map objects of the map picture; and

(iv) obtain the vector based map data from the location, wherein the obtained vector based map data satisfies the request for the map picture.

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9. The apparatus of claim **8**, wherein only the vector based map data required to satisfy the request is obtained.

10. The apparatus of claim **8**, wherein the application is further configured to 15 display the map picture.

11. The apparatus of claim **8**, wherein the vector based map data is obtained from a map server across a network connection.

20 12. The apparatus of claim **8**, wherein the application is further configured to create the map file.

13. The apparatus of claim **8**, wherein the application is further configured to set map display properties and a level of interaction.

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14. The apparatus of claim **8**, wherein the application comprises a browser plug-in.

15. An article of manufacture embodying logic that causes a computer-30 implemented graphics system to obtain a map, wherein the logic comprises:

receiving a request for a map picture;

obtaining a map file;

determining, from the map file, a location of vector based map data, wherein the vector based map data defines one or more map objects of the map picture; and

5   obtaining the vector based map data from the location, wherein the obtained vector based map data satisfies the request for the map picture.

16.   The article of manufacture of claim **15**, wherein only the vector based map data required to satisfy the request is obtained.

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17.   The article of manufacture of claim **15**, wherein the logic further comprises displaying the map picture.

18.   The article of manufacture of claim **15**, wherein the vector based map
15   data is obtained from a map server across a network connection.

19.   The article of manufacture of claim **15**, the logic further comprises creating the map file.

20   20.   The article of manufacture of claim **15**, the logic further comprises setting map display properties and a level of interaction.

21.   The article of manufacture of claim **15**, wherein the logic is performed by a browser plug-in.